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SIPDIS

HQ SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
TREASURY FOR MMALLOY
COMMERCE FOR 4431/MAC/WH/JLAO
NOAA PASS TO WILLIAM BRENNAN, JACK DUNNIGAN
NSF PASS TO JULIE MORRIS
USUN PASS TO UNESCO
ESTH-LAC

E.O. 12958: N/A

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UNESCO, VE

SUBJECT: IOC SUB-COMMISSION FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND ADJACENT
REGIONS, OCT 22-26 2008

11. (U) SUMMARY: The USDEL to the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and adjacent regions (IOCARIBE, 22-26 October in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela) met its primary objectives: the US was reelected as Vice Chairman for IOCARIBE; NOAA's proposed project regarding best management practices for nutrient/sediment reduction in small island states was adopted; and IOCARIBE adopted a three-year budget focused on priority programs complementing US science priorities. While IOCARIBE brainstormed on ways to promote the 50th Anniversary of IOC in the LAC region, concern over the relocation of the IOCARIBE Secretary to UNESCO's Kingston office to undertake additional regional UNESCO responsibilities raised doubts about IOCARIBE's future. The USDEL was lead by Bill Proenza, Director of NOAA National Weather Service's Southern Region, who was accompanied by representatives of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and National Ocean Service as well as the Department of State (OES). For further information regarding any of the items in this report, contact Arthur Paterson, NOAA/NOS, arthur.e.paterson@noaa.gov. END SUMMARY.

IOC BUDGET CONSTRAINTS FORCE IOCARIBE MOVE TO KINGSTON

12. (U) In line with UN policy of decentralization and consolidation of programs, UNESCO reallocated resources originally supporting the IOCARIBE Secretariat in Cartagena, Colombia to a post in the UNESCO office in Kingston. Sidebars and consultation with USUNESCO indicated that the "new" post would dilute attention to IOCARIBE matters, since the post would also service the broader science agenda of UNESCO in the region. Latin American countries noted their concern over relocation of services from Colombia, where a new Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded large marine ecosystem contractor team will be located. IOCARIBE adopted a recommendation calling on IOC and UNESCO to make efforts to re-establish a full-time UNESCO post for the IOCARIBE Secretary and urged Member States to advocate for this position through their Permanent Delegates to UNESCO.

IOCARIBE AND IOC's 50th ANNIVERSARY 2010

13. (U) The Chair facilitated a discussion session regarding regional efforts to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of IOC in 2010. Some noteworthy initiatives include Venezuela's offer to host a joint research cruise on board the R/V GUAQUIERI II in September/October 2009, Cuba's call for participation in the XII Latin American Congress on Marine Sciences in October 2009 in Havana, and Brazil's interest in the establishment of a 50th IOC anniversary fellowship program. The US should consider ways to collaborate with all three prospects. (COMMENT: Cuba's invitation brings to mind the need to facilitate visa processing between our countries.

This facilitation has already been working for well over a decade during all UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Region IV meetings to assure attendance and participation of both nations. END COMMENT.)

14. (U) In addition, IOCARIBE agreed to develop a statement to the 2009 IOC Assembly acknowledging regional commitment to IOCARIBE. Towards this end, the IOCARIBE officers will develop a draft statement highlighting the lifesaving and socio-economic value of data derived from IOC programs and capacity building efforts. We expect to receive this draft for review by the end of January.

STATUS OF LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM (LME) PROGRAMS

15. (U) The Caribbean LME (CLME) proposal was approved by the GEF in April 2008 and will receive funding for program implementation in 2009. The program places heavy emphasis on integration of governance systems in the region, developing linkages from local to national to regional scales. The

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selection of the Program Manager will be finalized by the IOCARIBE Secretariat within the month such that work can commence in January 2009. Member states anticipate that climate change impacts will be addressed within the program. Further, since most regional attention has been devoted to securing CLME funding over the past several years, the Secretary suggested that new progress can be made in developing the program for the Pacific LME effort for Central America.

16. (U) The project document for the Gulf of Mexico LME, which addresses both US and Mexican interests, is currently under review. Scientists from the United States and Mexico met via conference call over the summer to prepare for program implementation, pending a positive outcome of the proposal review process. The US and Mexico are participating in a planning meeting this month for the next State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit. While there, they will also discuss program oversight and implementation of each of the three pilot projects.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (HAB)

17. (U) Jose Juis Pena of Mexico has been selected as the new chair of the IOC Regional HAB Networks Caribbean Network/"Algas Nocivas en el Caribe y Regiones Adyacentes" (ANCA). The next ANCA meeting will be held in February or March of 2009 in Antigua, Guatemala. Planning is underway for the 2nd Symposium on Harmful Algal Blooms. IOCARIBE acknowledged the ongoing need for regional collaboration on monitoring and the regulation of release of ballast water. Barbados suggested that IOCARIBE must combine efforts among Spanish-speaking Member States with those of the English-speaking Member States. USDEL encouraged participation in the NSF-sponsored young scientist workshop on Advanced Tropical Phycology (Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, 14 August-4 September 2009).

INTEGRATED COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT (ICAM)

¶8. (U) IOCARIBE will invest its limited funding in two projects on coastal erosion and nutrient enrichment: the US proposal to develop a decision support modeling system for four small island watersheds to reduce loading of sediment and nutrients into the near-shore marine environment; and the Colombian proposal to address coastal erosion challenges in the region, for which a formal proposal will be presented for IOCARIBE consideration during the intercessional period. US identification of bilingual coastal erosion experts to participate in the program development could help the region prepare a fundable proposal.

OCEAN OBSERVATIONS AND SERVICES

¶9. (U) IOCARIBE reconfirmed prioritization for tsunami data management, and Caribbean marine atlas programs, and acknowledged that their success was dependent on IOCARIBE collaborations and the support for such collaboration provided via IOC/UNESCO budget. The IOCARIBE-Global Ocean Observation System (GOOS) program was similarly endorsed as a priority, for which the Steering Committee would likely convene in March 2009. NOAA and the USGS should plan for some level of technical engagement in this activity.

¶10. (U) IOCARIBE expressed interest in clarifying the status of the current tide gauge network. Cuba called for an updating of the status of the tide gauge network, acknowledging with appreciation the efforts of the IOCARIBE-GOOS co-chair, Doug Wilson (US). Venezuela, Dominican Republic and Jamaica noted plans to install new tide gauges. USDEL noted collaboration with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre that has received World Bank funds to enhance the observing network.

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BUDGET AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES:

¶11. (U) IOCARIBE adopted a zero growth 2009-2011 budget, applying \$80,000 among ongoing programs (GOOS, LME, ICAM) and program development (ICAM and HABS). Tsunami and coastal hazards as well as the Caribbean Marine Atlas will be supported by a IOC/UNESCO allocation of \$65,000 and \$5,000 respectively. IOCARIBE's 2009 program is estimated to be USD \$3,457,000 of which \$170,500 will be supplied via IOC/UNESCO and \$3,287,000 from extrabudgetary funds, including 1.7 million in GEF funding for CLME and \$1 million from as yet to be identified sources for tsunami.

¶12. (U) IOCARIBE reviewed existing collaborations with other regional organizations and announced the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Comision Permanente del Pacifico Sur, a regional body addressing the Southeast Pacific.

IOCARIBE LEADERSHIP

¶13. (U) The election of officers reconfirmed the existing leadership while substituting Jamaica for Barbados as a vice chair (Cuba remains as chair while US and Venezuela remain as vice chairs.) Jamaica's addition to the leadership team may enhance effective engagement of the newly established IOCARIBE Secretary post in Kingston.

SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM ON TSUNAMI

¶14. (U) Venezuela hosted a two-day symposium just prior to the IOCARIBE meeting during which experts from the region provided remarks to local citizens regarding the assessment of risk and the critical link between technical and community preparedness for tsunami events. The theme for the symposium, The Forgotten Danger ("El Peligro Olvidado") was taken from the assessment of the tsunami threat to life in the Caribbean Basin provided by the US head of Delegation, Bill Proenza, during the 2006 IOCARIBE meeting in Cartagena, Colombia. During the symposium, Proenza's presentation was delivered by the IOCARIBE Secretary, Cesar Toro. Among other speakers was Aurelio Mercado of the University of Puerto Rico Seismic Research Unit, who provided clear explanation of technical evidence regarding the threat to the region and the necessity of international collaboration for observation networks. A Venezuelan Meteorological Service representative argued that "there is no such thing as natural disasters, but there are extreme events with which we must learn to live." Overall, the large audience seemed quite receptive and significantly appreciative of this informative event which will likely stimulate community initiation of their own preparedness measures.

NEXT IOCARIBE

¶15. (U) The Dominican Republic offered to host the next IOCARIBE meeting and scientific symposium in the last quarter of 2010. While several ideas were suggested for the symposium (Cuba: sustaining ocean observation systems, US: interface of science and policy, and coastal zone management problems), IOCARIBE agreed this symposium would be further developed by the officers in conjunction with the host country in light of the domestic audience.

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